GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES POLS 2311-007

PROFESSOR A.B. BAYRAM

Office Location: 405 University Hall

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:00 PM

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E-mail is the best way to reach me. Please allow 48-hour response time.

Faculty Profile: https://www.uta.edu/mentis/public/#profile/profile/view/id/10606/category/1.

Time and Place of Class Meetings: MoWe 5:30PM - 6:50PM UH 110

The Syllabus:
It is essential that you carefully read and understand all parts of the syllabus. The syllabus should be regarded as a contract between us. Reading and understanding the syllabus is your homework for the first week. Please take the time to understand course policies and requirements explained in the syllabus.

Description of Course Content:
This course offers an introduction to the constituent units and workings of the American government, and provides an overview of the politics of the United States. In the first part of this course, we will examine the relationship between citizens and the government, explore the U.S. Constitution and Federalism, and learn about civil rights and liberties. The second section of the course is devoted to the key actors in American politics, such as the media, interest groups, and political parties. In the third part, we will learn about the institutions of the American national government, and specifically focus on the Congress, the Presidency, and courts. Before we wrap up the semester, we will also explore domestic and foreign policy making processes.

Student Learning Outcomes:
After taking this course, students will 1) demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of American government and politics, 2) acquire knowledge of the key actors in American politics and institutions of the national government, and 3) develop the ability to critically analyze current debates in American politics.

These outcomes will be achieved through lectures, class discussions and other class activities, and appropriate examinations and assignments.

Requirements:
Requirements for this course include: Attendance & active participation in class discussions, a quiz, two mid-term exams, and a final exam. All examinations will be written in class.

Textbooks:

Required:
-Gingsberg, Benjamin; Lowi, Theodore; Weir, Margaret and Spitzer, Robert. 2011. We The People: An Introduction to American Politics. Essentials Edition. Norton (WTP hereafter)

Optional:
-Rourke, John T., ed. 2012. You Decide! 2012: Current Debates in American Politics. Boston: Longman (YD hereafter).We will read a few sections from this book. This book will be on reserve at the library. Even if you elect not to purchase this book, the readings from the book are required.

Description of Major Assignments & Examinations:
Attendance & Participation: 10%
Quiz 10%
Three Movie Reports 15% (5 % Each)
Mid-Term I 20%
Mid-Term I 20%
Final Exam 25%
Optional Extra-Credit Assignment (A total of 3 points are possible; points earned will be weighted and added to a student's cumulative grade)

All exams are closed-book and will be written in class. I will grade your scantron. Please mark your answers carefully on the optical form. Students should be on time for the exams. Movie reports (2-page double spaced) must be typed and submitted in class on the indicated dates. More information on movie reports will be provided.

Course Format:
This course uses a mixed format that combines lectures with class discussions and class activities. Typically, the first meeting of the week will be lecture-oriented while the second meeting will be devoted to class discussions and group exercises. The lecture component of the course will provide a comprehensive review of the scheduled chapters from the course textbook. Lectures will sometimes include additional information. The discussion part of the course will draw upon current debates in American Politics. We will assess the merits and drawbacks of alternative viewpoints and engage contemporary issues. I will also encourage you to form your own opinions. Different classroom activities will be scattered across sessions as needed. These activities are designed to facilitate hands-on learning.

Student engagement and active learning will be emphasized at all times. Even lecture-oriented sessions will be interactive and solicit student-input on a regular basis.

Students should be engaged in the course at all times. This means, being familiar with all content, completing the assigned readings before class, actively take part in class discussions, and contacting me if you need help.

My power-presentations will guide us in class by offering on outline of the themes we will cover. I will make these available to you on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to print them out.

Attendance:
I expect you to attend all sessions. Class attendance and active participation in class discussions are critical to succeed in this course. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from your classmates. I do not provide lecture notes. Powerpoint slides on Blackboard will remain accessible until the end of the semester.

Participation:
I expect you to do the readings before class, be prepared to discuss them, and ask/answer questions based on the course material. I may sometimes call on you. It is your responsibility to be prepared. Please note that merely coming to class (but participating) will only give you about half of the participation/attendance points.

Participation is an important component of your grade and plays a critical role in learning. Participation includes, among others, asking and answering questions, commenting on the readings or other students' points, being engaged in class discussions and class activities as well as taking ownership of your own learning by asking for my help if you need assistance.

I understand that some individuals may to be shy, but I still emphasize class participation because a) participation greatly contributes to learning, b) the classroom offers a friendly environment to practice communication skills, and c) our university stresses active learning.

The classroom is an open forum. We value and respect all opinions.

Absences:
Missing class due to illness, family emergency or similar extraordinary situations will not affect your grade. Consistently missing class will negatively reflect upon your grade. I will periodically take attendance.

Grading:
There is one extra-credit work in this course. You will write an essay on a topic covered in class. Completion of the extra credit assignment is optional.

I will hold review sessions before the mid-terms to help you succeed. I will also sometimes start some of the class sessions with a brief review of the material covered in the previous session. I strongly recommend you pay attention during review sessions (reviews include invaluable tips on the exams). I may decide to include bonus questions in the exam but am not obligated to do so.

Students are expected to keep track of their performance throughout the semester and seek guidance from available sources (including the instructor) if their performance drops below satisfactory levels. I will occasionally send out e-mails encouraging students to see me during office hours so that we could figure out a strategy for success. I am committed to facilitating everyones' learning. If you have concerns about anything, please do not hesitate visit with me.

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:
F: 0-59, D: 60-69, C: 70-79, B: 80-89, A: 90-100

Make-up Exams:
No make-up exams/quizzes will be given except in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. There are no exceptions to this rule. Documentation must be submitted as required by the university and is subject to verification.

Etiquette:
Cell phones and other gadgets should be turned off or switched to silent in the classroom. Computers should not be used for surfing the internet or for extra-curricular activities.

Civility in discussions and discourse is expected at all times.

Student Feedback:
If you have questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions, please feel free to contact me. If you happen to experience difficulties with understanding the material, do not hesitate to see me during office hours. I am here to help you and I love what I do.

E-mail Policy:
Please to conform to proper e-mail etiquette and address me as your professor. Make sure to include your name and the course you are taking. It is important that your e-mail provides sufficient context. Please note that coming to my office hours may serve you better if you have a complex question. Please write your emails carefully even if you are using a mobile device. All email communication between us must be understood as official communication.

I will normally respond to e-mails within two business days. This means e-mailing me a few hours before class will not work. If you have an emergency, please inform the Department of Political Science Administrative Office.

When you e-mail me, please try to have a somewhat formal subject line so that I do not accidentally miss your e-mail or confuse it with junk mail. (For example: POLS Course Number: Your reason for e-mailing (E.g. POLS 2311: Question about the Mid-term).

Communication:
Students are responsible for regularly checking their university e-mail and Blackboard for announcements. When I send an e-mail to the class or post an announcement on Blackboard, I will assume that everyone got the message. Failure to be aware of course news may have negative consequences.

Drop Policy:
Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/).

Americans with Disabilities Act:
I rely on the Office for Students with Disabilities for accommodations.

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Academic Integrity:
I rely on the Office of Student Conduct for addressing academic misconduct. Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. It is the student's responsibility to know what constitutes academic misconduct and be aware of the university's honor code.

All students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

"I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence. I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code."

Instructors may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System Regents' Rule 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

Student Support Services:
UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at www.uta.edu/resources.

Electronic Communication:
UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php.

Student Feedback Survey:
At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit http://www.uta.edu/sfs.

Final Review Week:
A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabus. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall

not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located [insert a description of the nearest exit/emergency exit]. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.

Disclaimer

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus and/or course content as needed.

SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

Jan 13 Welcome
-Discussion of course format and requirements

Jan 15 Introduction to the course
-Discussion of course format and requirements cont.
-Time to discuss student expectations
-Friendly advice on college professionalization
-Importance of learning about American government and politics

Foundations
Jan 20 No Class
-Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday

Jan 22 Citizen and the Government
-WTP: Chp. 1

Jan 27 The Founding and the Constitution
-WTP: Chp. 2

Jan 29 Federalism
-WTP: Chp. 3

Feb 3 Federalism Cont.
-WTP: Chp. 3
-YD: Chp. 2

Feb 5 **Quiz**
-In class
-Please bring pencils and optical forms (Form 882 E)
-Study only what we have covered thus far

Feb 10 Civil Liberties and Rights
-WTP: Chp. 4

Feb 12 Civil Liberties and Rights Cont.
-WTP: Chp. 4
-Mid-term review

Feb 17 **Mid-Term Exam I**
-In class
-Please bring pencils and optical forms (Form 882 E)
-Study only what we have covered thus far

Feb 19 Movie Analysis
-Please watch and report on the movie "Lincoln" (Daniel Day-Lewis)

Actors

Feb 24 Public Opinion
-WTP: Chp. 5

Feb 26 Public Opinion Cont.
-WTP: Chp. 5 Cont.

Mar 3 The Media
-WTP: Chp. 6

Mar 5 The Media Cont.
-No Reading

Mar 10-Mar 14 Spring Vacation

Mar 17 Parties and Elections
-WTP: Chp. 7

Mar 19 Interest Groups
-WTP: Chp 8

Mar 24 Movie Analysis
-Please watch and report on the movie "Primary Colors" (John Travolta)

Mar 26 Extra Credit
-Please work on the Blackboard extra credit assignment

Mar 31
-Guest lecture

Apr 2
-TBA

Institutions

Apr 7 Congress
-WTP: Chp. 9

Apr 9 Congress Cont.
-WTP: Chp. 9 Cont.

Apr 14 Review
-Review for the mid-term and catch up

Apr 16 **Mid-Term Exam II**
-In class
-Please bring pencils and optical forms (Form 882 E)
-Study only what we have covered thus far

Apr 21 The Presidency
-WTP: Chp. 10

Apr 23 Movie Analysis
-Please watch and report on the movie "The American President" (Michael Douglas)

Apr 28 The Supreme Court
-WTP: Chp. 12

Apr 30 -Last Day of Our Class
-Review & Wrap Up

Final Exam May 5th 5:30-8 PM
Please Bring Pencils and Optical Forms (Form 882 E)

Time and date of the final exam is scheduled by the university. I am not able to change the day/time of the final.